

DELTA PROTECTION COMMISSION

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February 9, 1996

To: Delta Protection Commission
From: Margit Aramburu, Executive Director
Subject: **Egeria densa**

Background:

At the last Commission meeting, the Commission received several letters from the public and a public comment asking the Commission's assistance in developing an eradication program for the aquatic plant *Egeria densa*. The Commission asked staff to prepare additional information about the plant, its impacts on the Delta and Delta activities, and what agency has authority or responsibility to eradicate the plant.

What is it?

Egeria densa is an exotic plant (not native) which grows underwater in a freshwater environment. The plant is native to South America. The plant is rooted in the bottom of the channels and grows upward toward sunlight. The plant does not emerge from the water. The characteristics of the plant is one slender main stem with "whorls" of small leaves every few inches. You have probably seen this plant in aquariums.

Where is it?

At this time the plant seems to be localized in the western area of the Delta, in Contra Costa County. As it is a freshwater plant, so it will not survive downstream. However, it could grow in other areas of the Delta if strands are brought into these areas.

When did the plant appear?

The plant has become a nuisance only in the last two to three years.

What are the problems?

The plants can grow in a very dense pattern, creating a "bed". This creates problems for recreational boating by catching on propellers, clogging waterways, and clogging intakes for engines and generators causing engines to overheat.

What is the methodology and cost for eradicating Egeria densa?

A researcher at U.C. Davis, Dr. Lars Anderson, has developed a program for removing the plant. Staff will present additional information about the methodology at the meeting.

Who has authority or responsibility to remove the plant?

Right now, no agency has been given responsibility over all exotic plant removal. The Department of Boating and Waterways in the Resources Agency has been given responsibility and funding for removal of water hyacinth only. Pending in the legislature is new legislation which would authorize Department of Boating and Waterways to assist in removal of "aquatic weeds", but only from lakes and reservoirs (see Exhibit A). The pending legislation includes no funding.

SB 1416 Aquatic weeds: boating.

BILL NUMBER: SB 1416 INTRODUCED 01/18/96

INTRODUCED BY Senator Thompson

JANUARY 18, 1996

An act to add Section 64.5 to the Harbors and Navigation Code, relating to aquatic weeds.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 1416, as introduced, M. Thompson. Aquatic weeds: boating.

Under existing law, the Department of Boating and Waterways is authorized to cooperate with agencies of the United States and other public agencies in controlling water hyacinth in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, its tributaries, and the Suisun Marsh. The department, other state agencies, cities, counties, and districts are authorized to cooperate with each other in controlling water hyacinth in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, its tributaries, and the Suisun Marsh and may furnish money, services, equipment, and other property to that end.

This bill would authorize the department to control aquatic weeds in lakes and reservoirs upon appropriation of funds for that purpose by the Legislature.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes. State-mandated local program: no.

SECTION 1. The Legislature hereby finds and declares that aquatic weeds, other than water hyacinth in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and Suisun Marsh, can and do cause problems with boating in California's lakes and reservoirs, sometimes to the point of blocking boating and navigation and impairing other recreational uses of lakes and reservoirs, and may threaten the health and stability of fisheries and other ecosystems within those lakes and reservoirs. Aquatic weeds that limit boating can also have serious effects, not only on the activity of boating itself, but on the economies that depend on boating related activities. California boaters pay fees to own and operate their boats on California lakes and reservoirs. Therefore, if aquatic weeds are limiting or preventing boating activity on certain lakes and reservoirs, the weeds need to be abated. The Legislature finds that the Department of Boating and Waterways is the logical agency to assist in mitigating those aquatic weed problems.

SEC. 2. Section 64.5 is added to the Harbors and Navigation Code, to read:

64.5. In addition to other powers specified in this code, the department may control aquatic weeds in lakes and reservoirs in this state upon appropriation by the Legislature of funds to cover the costs of any such control program.



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EXHIBIT A

AB 2193 Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta: *Egeria densa*.

BILL NUMBER: AB 2193 INTRODUCED 02/08/96

INTRODUCED BY Assembly Member Rainey

FEBRUARY 8, 1996

An act to amend Section 64 of the Harbors and Navigation Code, relating to water.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 2193, as introduced, Rainey. Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta: *Egeria densa*.

Existing law designates the Department of Boating and Waterways as the lead agency in cooperating with other agencies in controlling water hyacinth in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, its tributaries, and the Suisun marsh.

This bill also would designate the department as the lead agency in cooperating with other agencies in controlling *Egeria densa* in those areas.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes. State-mandated local program: no.

SECTION 1. Section 64 of the Harbors and Navigation Code is amended to read:

64. (a) The Legislature hereby finds and declares that the growth of water hyacinth *and Egeria densa* in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, its tributaries, and the Suisun Marsh has occurred at an unprecedented level and that the resulting accumulations of water hyacinth *and Egeria densa* obstruct navigation, impair other recreational uses of waterways, have the potential for damaging manmade facilities, and may threaten the health and stability of fisheries and other ecosystems within the delta and marsh. Accordingly, it is necessary that the state, in cooperation with agencies of the United States, undertake an aggressive program for the effective control of water hyacinth *and Egeria densa* in the delta, its tributaries, and the marsh.

(b) The department is designated as the lead agency of the state for the purpose of cooperating with agencies of the United States and other public agencies in controlling water hyacinth *and Egeria densa* in the delta, its tributaries, and the marsh.

(c) The department, other state agencies, cities, counties, and districts are hereby authorized to cooperate with one another and with agencies of the United States in controlling water hyacinth *and Egeria densa* in the delta, its tributaries, and the marsh and may furnish money, services, equipment, and other property to that end.



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